Years ago Frank Castle's family was violently gunned down by gangsters. He's spent every day since paying them back.

Frank Castle put corrupt madman Norman Osborn in his sights and took a shot. Super geeks guarding Osborn busted up Frank's day, almost killing him. Frank and his new assistant, straightedge, cyber-sensei Henry Russo made it onto Norman's list.

Norman sent Dark Wolverine to kill Frank. In a fight to the death on a rainy rooftop the Punisher was torn to pieces. Frank's body was dumped into an open sewer…

But Frank woke up. Stitched together, a cobbled husk of meat and machine, by the chemical vampire Dr. Michael Morbius. Morbius had joined with his old teammates in the secret Legion of Monsters to protect the world's monster population from a terrible band of killers known only as Hunter of Monster Special Force. They desperately needed Frank's help.

Frank refused and skulked away into the catacombs beneath New York…

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PUNISHER (ISSN #1946-0767) **No. 12, February, 2010.** Published Monthly by MARVEL PUBLISHING, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10016. **PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES.**

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Printed in the USA. Subscription rate (U.S. dollars) for 12 issues: U.S. $27.00; Canada $37.00; Foreign $39.00. **POSTMASTER: SEND ALL ADDRESS CHANGES TO PUNISHER, C/O MARVEL SUBSCRIPTION DEPT. P.O. BOX 5187 BRENTWOOD, TN 37024. TELEPHONE # (800) 217-9158. FAX # (615) 377-0525. subscriptions@marvel.com.** ALAN FINE, CEO Marvel Publishing Division and EVP & CMO Marvel Characters B.V.; DAN BUCKLEY, Chief Executive Officer and Publisher – Print, Animation & Digital Media; JIM SOKOLOWSKI, Chief Operating Officer; DAVID GABRIEL, SVP of Publishing Sales & Circulation; DAVID BOGART, SVP of Business Affairs & Talent Management; MICHAEL PASCIULLO, VP of Merchandising & Communications; JIM O'KEEFE, VP of Operations & Logistics; DAN CARR, Executive Director of Publishing Technology; JUSTIN F. GABRIE, Director of Publishing & Editorial Operations; SUSAN CRESPI, Editorial Operations Manager; ALEX MORALES, Publishing Operations Manager; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Ron Stern, VP of Business Development, rstern@marvel.com. For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 800-217-9158.

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He who fights with monsters might take care lest he thereby become a monster.
-Friedrich Nietzsche
SILENCE!
:MMHURRGLLE:
DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU ARE BEING TREATED UNFAIRLY, HORRIFIC BEAST OF THE DEPTHS?
SAVOR THIS--VERY SOON YOU HAVE A REASON TO SCREAM!
:MMHURRGLLE:
:GAKK:
W-WHAT AM I DOING HERE? WHAT DO YOU WANT?!
WHAT DO I WANT?

I WANT FOR THE INFAMOUS MANPHIBIAN TO TELL ME WHERE TO FIND HIS MONSTER ASSOCIATES AND THE ITEM THEY ARE HIDING.

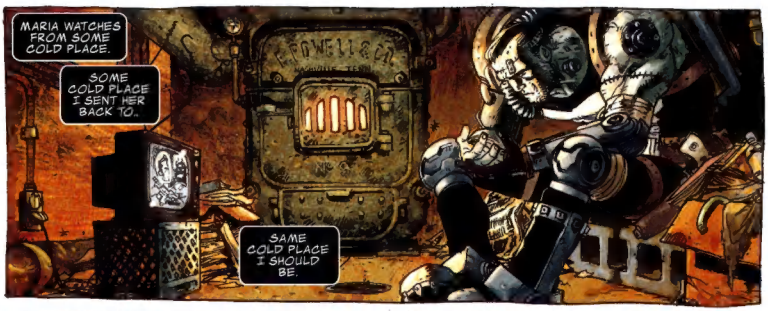
WE CONSSSPIRE TO HIDE NOTHING.
YOU HAVE NO RIGHT.
RIGHT? I HUNT WITH DIVINE PURPOSE--TO CLEANSE GOD'S EARTH OF ALL SHADOW BEASTS AND HORNED DEVILS--IT IS A PRIVILEGE.

YOU HUNT ONLY THOSE MONSTERSSS THAT THE EYE CAN DETECT.
WHAT ABOUT THE INNOCENT BLOOD ON YOUR HANDSSS?
MONSTER BLOOD IS HOLY--TO BATHE IN IT IS A SACRAMENT.

YOUR REPUTATION PRECEDES YOU, THE ALIEN SCIENTIST WITH DELUSIONS OF NOBILITY.
I KNEW YOU COULDN'T BE MADE TO TALK...
I'LL TELL YOU NOTHING.

SO I HAD MY MEN BRING ME YOUR CHILDREN.
NO!!
THEY--UNDER TERRIBLE DURESS--TOLD ME ABOUT THE MONSTER REFUGE.
HOW THEY COULDN'T JOIN YOU FOR LACK OF CLEAN WATER IN THE PUTRID CATACOMBS.
WAS IT DIFFICULT TO LEAVE THEM BEHIND?
:SOB: I-IF YOU KNOW WHERE THE OTHERS ARE... THEN WHY...
WHY BRING ME HERE? WHY SHOW ME THIS HORROR--
WHY DO ANYTHING?
FWOOSH
I LIKE IT.

SHOULDN'T BE HERE.
NO REASON. NOT ANYMORE.
FIX THAT.


MARIA WATCHES FROM SOME COLD PLACE.
SOME COLD PLACE I SENT HER BACK TO..
SAME COLD PLACE I SHOULD BE.

BODY'S A ROTTING FORGERY. HEAD IS FUZZY.
TAKE THE DAMNED PILLS.
NEED MY HEAD STRAIGHT TO DO THE FIX.

MARIA BURNS.
TAKE THE PILLS.
SHE CALLS MY NAME.

TAKE THE DAMNED PILLS.
HAND GIVES SOUND REFUSAL.

HANDS FAIL.
CLUMSY-- SWOLLEN.
MY DAUGHTER SCREAMS MY NAME FROM A BURRING COFFIN.
TAKE... THE DAMNED PILL...
SHE'S CHOKING ON FLAMES.
THERE YOU GO.
GET YOUR HEAD STRAIGHT.
NOW FIX IT.
FIX IT FOR GOOD.
LAST MEAL.

KRIT
SQQUEEE--
THEN I'LL FIX IT.
THEN I'LL FINALLY GO HOME.
HRMM--?
DEVO
WHATEVER YOU'RE SELLIN'-- I AIN'T BUYIN', HEAR?!
GET OUT!!
KLAMM
WHAT DID I JUST SAY?

REVO
REVO

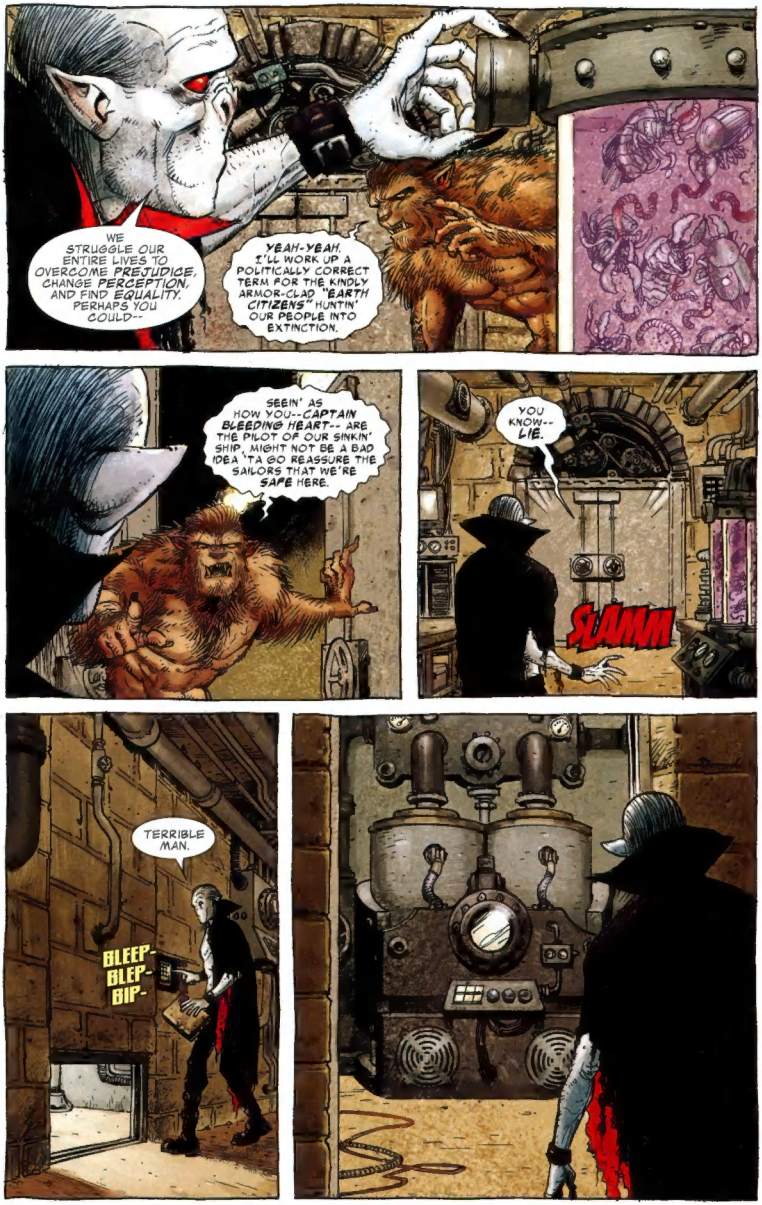
MANPHIBIAN IS MISSIN'.

HE WENT TO CHECK ON HIS KIN. NEVER CAME BACK.
PUT MY MONEY ON DEAD AT THIS POINT.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED OPTIMISM. A BRIGHT LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS.
I AIN'T THE ONE OPENED THE CAN OF WORMS GOT US ALL INTO THIS LESS-THAN-OPTIMISTIC SITUATION.

NOT THAT I'M POINTIN' ANY FINGERS.

AIN'T NO SECRET AROUND CAMP-- SOMETHIN'S WRONG.
WORD IS THOSE JAPANESE BASTARDS ARE ONTO US HERE.
THEIR NATIONALITY SHOULDN'T PLAY ANY PART IN THIS.


WE STRUGGLE OUR ENTIRE LIVES TO OVERCOME PREJUDICE, CHANGE PERCEPTION, AND FIND EQUALITY. PERHAPS YOU COULD--
YEAH-YEAH. I'LL WORK UP A POLITICALLY CORRECT TERM FOR THE KINDLY ARMOR-CLAD "EARTH CITIZENS" HUNTIN' OUR PEOPLE INTO EXTINCTION.
SEEIN' AS HOW YOU--CAPTAIN BLEEDING HEART-- ARE THE PILOT OF OUR SINKIN' SHIP, MIGHT NOT BE A BAD IDEA TA GO REASSURE THE SAILORS THAT WE'RE SAFE HERE.
YOU KNOW-- LIE.
SLAMM
TERRIBLE MAN.
BLEEP-BLEP-BIP-

NO. NO REASON TO HIDE IT.
IT'S SAFER WITH ME.
WE ARE ALL SAFER IF IT IS WITH ME.

PILL WEARING OFF...
FIX IT... NOW OR NEVER...
WHILE BRAIN... BRAIN STILL WORK...
G-GHRO--! LHEAVE!
THE KID LET ME KNOW YOU NEEDED SOME OF THESE.
MORBIUS I PASS ALONG A GREAT MANY SLURS.
DIDN'T MAKE MANY FRIENDS DURING YOUR VISIT.
PRILLSS...
KID PERSUADED HIM TO THOUGH.
S EMS HE OOK A TO
HRMM...
YOU WANT TO THANK ME?
COME.
I HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU.

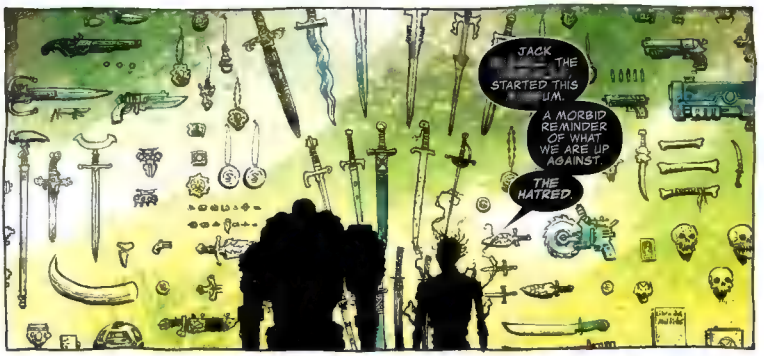
I KNOW YOUR STORY. KNOW WHAT YOU UNDERSTAND WHY. IT IS IN X-'S NATURE TO PROTECT.
SOMETHING HUNTING HUNTING AND KILLING INNOCENT CREATURES--
I'M NOT IN THIS BUSINESS.
THAT BUSINESS LET YOU IN?
THE NOTHING BUSINESS.
NIHILISM. THIS A CONCEPT KNOW MUCH ABOUT.
IN LIFE I WAS SLAVE TO THE
A REBELLION WAS TO THREE THOUSAND YEARS FROZEN IN A BLACK TOMB.
SIR.
KNOW WORTH. IT'S A PATH AND FROM
HELPING OUR PEOPLE TO ENJOY THE FRUITS IN SOLITUDE. THIS A WORTHY OPPONENT TO YOUR APATHY.
A TO LIVE. THIS WORTH FIGHTING FOR.

WELCOME TO MONSTER METROPOLIS, FRANK CASTLE.

SINCE THE ATTACKS BEGAN, THEY'VE THOUSANDS OF US. BEINGS, DIMENSIONAL TRAVELERS, ALIENS, ODDITIES OF THE NOT DISTINGUISH.
TO THEM IT IS ARE MONSTERS-- WE DEATH.

WE ESTABLISHED MONSTER METROPOLIS AS A BEACON--A SAFE HAVEN FROM THE HUNTERS.
THE CITY GREW AT AN INCREDIBLE RATE. THEY ARE ALL HERE NOW.
THE REMAINING MONSTERS FROM OVER THE WORLD.

THEY CAME WITH ONE PROMISE: THE LEGION OF MONSTERS WOULD PROTECT THEM.
I FEAR THAT MAY GO UNFULFILLED.


JACK [illegible] THE STARTED THIS U.M.
A MORBID REMINDER OF WHAT WE ARE UP AGAINST.
THE HATRED.

HUMANS GO TO GREAT LENGTHS TO SLAUGHTER [illegible] WHO ARE [illegible]
A TERRIBLE STROKE OF LUCK FOR MONSTERS... WE ARE EACH DIFFERENT TO ALL.
YEAH? YOU SHOULD GO GET A ROUND WITH THE X-MEN. HAVE A GOOD SOB.

UNLIKE THE MUTANTS, WE INVITE CONFLICT. WE'RE [illegible] MARTYRS. WE [illegible] WANT PROTECT A WORLD AND [illegible] FEARS
YES, WE WILL [illegible] THE [illegible] OF MAN WHEN NECESSARY.
MOST OF ALL...

WE [illegible] TO BE ALONE.
YEAH?

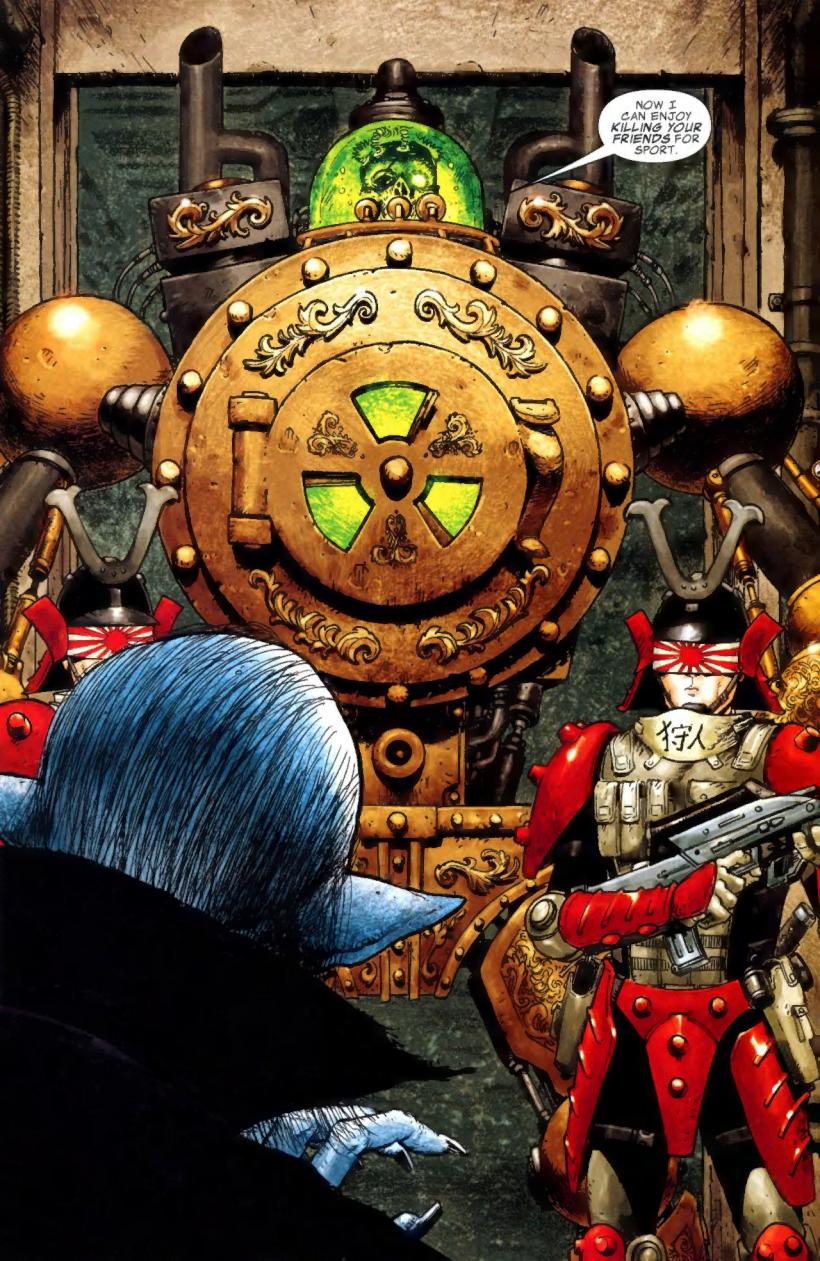
THAT'S ONE THING WE'VE GOT IN COMMON.

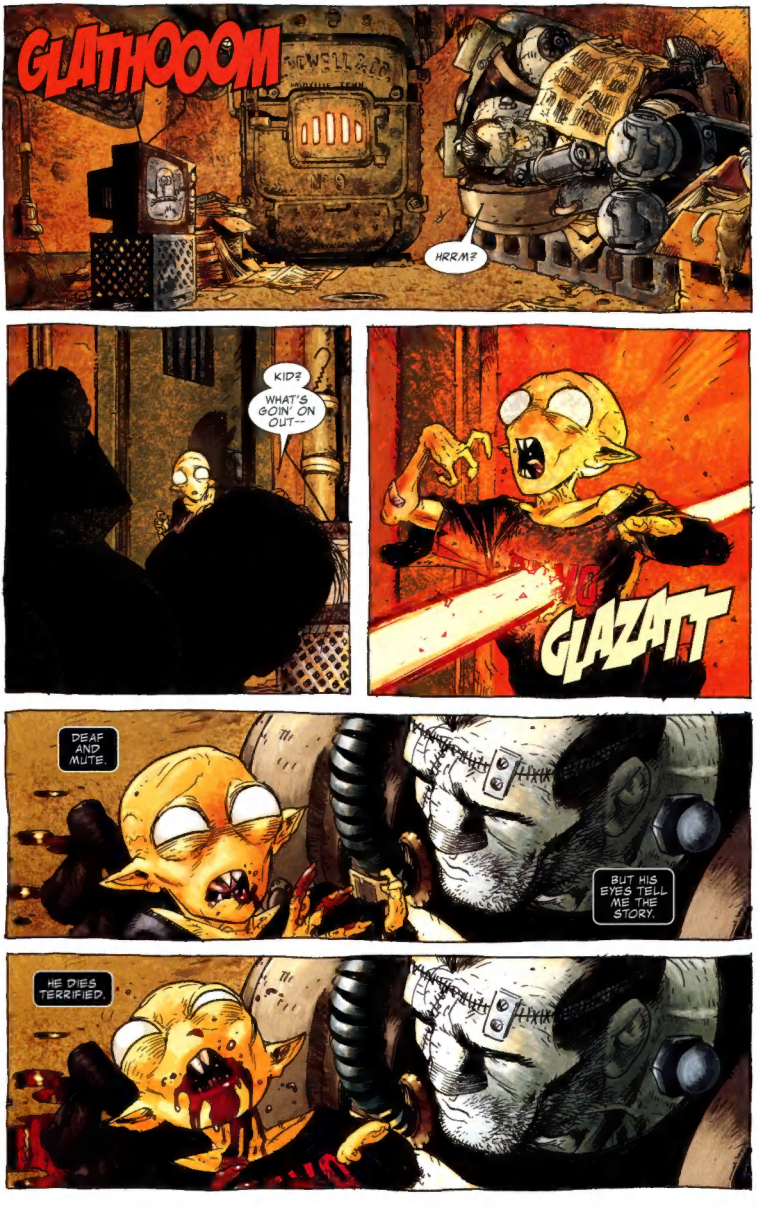
I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU EAT ■ WEEKS.
WHAT? OH, I'M FINE, FATHER. EVERYTHING IS GOOD--BEEN EATING FINE.
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN FEEDING ON, MICHAEL?
I GET BY ON A...A NEW FORMULA.
IT'S NEW.
HAVE YOU TOLD THE OTHERS YET?
WHY THEY ARE HUNTED--WHAT IT IS YOU HOLD?
HMM? NO, NOT YET. I HAVEN'T.
STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT.
HOW DO I GET RID OF SOMETHING SO POWERFUL... WHERE? WHO CAN I TRUST?
THE FANTASTIC FOUR, PERHAPS?
IN REED RICHARD'S HANDS THE STONE COULD BE USED TO ACCOMPLISH MUCH.
THE STONE HOLDS SUCH POWER... HOW WOULD ANY MORTAL WITHSTAND THE INFLUENCE OF SUCH INTOXICATING ENERGY?
ARE YOU NOT INFLUENCED BY IT?

I'M NO MERE MORTAL MAN.
I AM A MONSTER--CONTENT IN DARKNESS--I HAVE FEW DESIRES.
YOU ARE BOTH MORTAL AND MAN.
NO. I WILL NOT BE CORRUPTED BY ITS POWER.
YOU.
ALREADY.
ARE.
ALL MEN HAVE DESIRES--ARE YOURS BECOMING REALITY?
A LIVING VAMPIRE WHO NO LONGER REQUIRES BLOOD TO SURVIVE--THIS IS THE STONE'S INFLUENCE QUENCHING YOUR THIRST.
AND AS LONG AS IT IS HERE--
WE ARE ALL IN DANGER.
GUH-
OOOO

MELGORNO FIGHTS TO THE END!
HA!!
HA!!
HA!!
NO...
THOOM!
CLEANSE THE EARTH!
DESTROY ALL MONSTERS!
WHAT HAVE I DONE?

--MY SON, WHERE IS--
--EVERYWHERE! ALL DEAD--
HELP ME. IT HURTS--
GOD, NO. PLEASE!!
LOOK OUT, LOOK--
PRAY I AM NOT TOO LATE TO CONCEAL IT.
DELIGHTED TO SEE YOU HAVE THE STONE ON YOU.
COMBING THROUGH THIS PECREPIT PIT WOULD BE TERRIBLY TAXING--


NOW I CAN ENJOY KILLING YOUR FRIENDS FOR SPORT.
狩人


GLATHOOOM
HRRM?
KID?
WHAT'S GOIN' ON OUT--
GLAZATT
DEAF AND MUTE.
BUT HIS EYES TELL ME THE STORY.
HE DIES TERRIFIED.

HE WON'T BE THE ONLY ONE.
TO BE CONTINUED...

PUNISHER

MARVEL KNIGHTS C/O MARVEL COMICS
417 FIFTH AVE., NEW YORK, NY 10016

IF YOU DON'T WANT YOUR NAME OR ADRESS PRINTED, PLEASE LET US KNOW. LETTERS MAY BE EDITED FOR CONTENT AND LENGTH.

E-MAIL: MARVELKNIGHTS@MARVEL.COM

So, given the last few issues of Punisher have sold out in a mater of hours, it's possible this is your first issue. For anyone who doesn't know, we killed ol' Frank Castle in Dark Reign: The List – Punisher. If you missed it, there will be a second printing to ship around the time this comes out.

But, yeah, Frank was cut into pieces by Daken Akihiro, Norman Osborn's Dark Wolverine. I think none of it would have really been possible if not for the Hood and his resurrection of Frank's family in the Dead End arc. Frank's actions in issue #10—to put his family back into their graves—was kind of the straw that broke the Punisher's back. The List – The Punisher is Norman and Daken coming in for the final swoop; The Hood crushed Frank's soul and Daken and Norman crushed his body.

Whatever was left of Frank, we wanted to do something pretty wild with it. We're dealing with a character that is surrounded by cosmic dudes riding surfboards and men with radioactive spider-blood—we wanted this to be ripe with big ideas and over the top nuttiness, to feel like a Marvel Comic book. This is where we ended up. PunisherMax is a straight up Noir/Crime classic Punisher book, so if our shenanigans aren't up your alley (or even if they are) you should be reading that title.

Seeing as how Frank operates in a world where men stretch their arms into the Negative Zone, aliens invade every few weeks and there are a dozen Hulks running around, the idea that this sort of place doesn't affect Frank Castle is a bit ridiculous. So, as we were digging through the various possibilities of what hole we would drop Frank Castle down into, we all fell in love with the idea that it would involve the Legion of Monsters, who, as it turns out, used the Morlock tunnels as refuge centuries before the Morlocks existed. They would resurrect Frank to help them. Things wouldn't go according to plan.

So, that's where we are. Let's get into some of the initial letters we've been receiving about the first issue in the Franken-Castle arc.

Hi Rick, hope you're well.

Just a note to say thank you for bringing back the Legion of Monsters. I've been a fan of their singular appearance, and I've always hoped to see more of them as a group - I can't wait to buy the latest Punisher issue to see it in action!

From your Newsarama interview, you mentioned Ghost Rider and Hellstorm being too busy - did you originally plan to have them in the group? Was there anyone else you were hoping for?

Also, is there ANY possibility for a Legion of Monsters OR GR/Punisher/Wolverine series in the near future?

And whatever happened to your Legion of the Supernatural series?

Thanks for your time, Rick - and for all your hard work.

Regards,

Petar Grulovic
Mackay, Australia

RR - Petar, It's great to hear from all these Legion of the Monsters fans. We all love monsters, spacemen and giant robots; those are all great things aesthetically. There are a lot of adult readers of comics and graphic novels who grew up reading comics and watching Saturday morning cartoons who still love these sorts of things today—I'm one of those people—it's our mythology. So for me, it's really the most fun I can have as a writer, taking classic archetypes and using them to tell modern stories; so, on the outside, these ideas and concepts are just as fun and exciting as they were when we were kids but the stories are more hopefully compelling for someone with a more mature sensibility who is reading.

1. Ghost Rider and Hellstorm are busy in their current issues of GHOST RIDERS: HEAVEN'S ON FIRE and DOCTOR VODOO so I wanted to focus on the core of the monsters. Will we be seeing those other two members of the team? Maybe.

2. Jason Aaron and I talk about a Ghost Rider / Punisher team up once a week these days. We're looking for just the right hook before we pitch it. So who knows.

3. Legion of the Supernatural is on hold while I play with the Marvel monsters for a bit.

Hi,

My name is Ales Kot and I'm a writer. I know a little bit about the comic book industry, and I'd like to thank you and Tony Moore for being brave and doing something new. Great work.

Have a nice day, both of you.

Ales

RR - Thank you, sir.

Team Punisher,

As a 20 year plus reader of this character I thought I had see it all. With this single issue, your writing has sold me on the new arc. Forget the naysayers and please continue to focus on the "big picture" themes that make The Punisher such an intriguing character. We don't see much new ground broken on this character...now, thanks to you, we have an earthquake. I found this issue to be funky, insightful and full of potential. Kudos to you for having the guts to stick to your creative guns and to those readers who understand that change is vital to growth.

P.S. Does the Punisher like music?

Brian Louvr

RR - Punisher listens to a lot of Mastodon and 3 Inches of Blood now. Henry turned him on to it and he likes to listen to it before he heads out for a night of murder. Well, he used to. I don't think he has an Mp3 player in his new utility closet home under NY.

Rick,

I thought this was a really great issue. This concept struck me as a difficult idea to pull off, and I'm glad to see that you and the rest of the crew did so superbly, it was the best comic I read this week. It was everything I love about Marvel comics at their best, the perfect balance of something so gloriously strange and yet still so human.

As good as the script and concept are, I want to say I also thought Tony Moore's artwork was incredible, this was the best looking monster comic I've seen since Bissette and Totleben. His inking brought them to mind straight away without being derivative; it's masterful and communicates the different textures perfectly among the imaginative designs of the creatures.

I want to also mention Dan Brown's coloring (which was what jumped out at me immediately in the preview pages from The List) was the unsung hero of the book for me, I really like the more organic but still vibrant palette he's using. It's still colorful enough to communicate that beautiful pop absurdity of the Marvel comics universe, but is organic enough to communicate that these are wild creatures living in sewers. It's quite biological and earthen, for lack of better terms while still having that quintessential Marvel psychedelic undertone that I love. It really communicates the tone of the script perfectly and makes the book stand out even more from other comics.

Best,
-Derek Wisdom

RR - I recently had a conversation with another writer about ideas that demand the right artist. There are many ideas in comics that simply will not work unless you have the right art team. Big visual ideas like this demand A-list artists. Luckily, we have just that. I think Tony's Man-Thing might even rival Bissette and Totleben's Swamp-Thing. But what do I know. I just really like Tony's Man-Thing. So much.

Hey dude,

Listen - I haven't written a fan letter to a comic book since I was 14, but the moment I put Punisher #11 down I had to write you. I'm still processing the issue so I can't give you the most articulate write up other than the start of Franken-Castle was just plain awesome. 90% of Big Two comics bore the crap out of me, but this one had me seriously stoked. Matt Fraction put it extremely well on Twitter - you and Tony are very much the heirs apparent to Steve Gerber and Jack Davis, respectively, without treading on their ground. Don't get me wrong, I highly enjoyed your previous comics - especially Strange Girl and Fear Agent - but this is the absolute best work yet. Highly enjoyed it.

Now, keep this fan letter stuff between us. ;)

Hope all's well, bud.

Name Withheld

RR - Oh, Name Withheld. You say the nicest things. Tony and I are having the time of our lives; the entire team is firing on all cylinders. If I somehow get to write these kinds of comics and work with great people for the rest of my career I'd be a lucky man.

See you next issue for the bestest ever bloodbath in the history of Marvel Comics. Really. I've already seen it, it's pretty terrific. The Punisher leads the Legion, they all agree to make with the murder on the bad men, some folks die.

See you in 30,
Rick

NEXT ISSUE:

VC's Joe Caramagna | Sebastian Girner, Assistant Editor | Axel Alonso, Editor | Joe Quesada, Editor in Chief | Dan Buckley, Publisher | Alan Fine, Exec. Producer

Production